

## Monthly Update – March 2012

# Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

### OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization.

The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating our efforts on selected crops and regions, especially SAGCOT, to help transform the country's food security.

### FIELD VISTS HELP FARMERS RECOGNIZE THEIR POTENTIAL

Members of the Oitera Pre-Rural Cooperative Society in the Arusha region are like many smallholder farmers throughout Tanzania: they are risk-averse and learn through experience. Without exposure to successful examples, many farmers are hesitant to adopt the new technologies and crops promoted by USAID-TAPP staff.

Recognizing this, USAID-TAPP uses site visits as a way to encourage farmers participating in the program to adopt good agricultural practices (GAPs) and technologies being utilized successfully by other program beneficiaries. Successful farms become working classrooms for new trainees, and farmer leaders serve as peer educators. Farmer-members of the Oitera Pre-Rural Cooperative Society recently took part in such a visit, witnessing the use of GAPs on plots similar to their own, applied by farmers in similar circumstances to themselves.

"Field visits are great to farmers, because one can observe and easily learn how to practice the good agricultural practices," said Augustino Elias, a member of the group.

USAID-TAPP organized the field visit for the Smallholder farmers of Oitera Pre-Rural Cooperative Society prior to their preparation of three acres of land to be planted with hybrid onions and half-acre plot for maize. A kilogram of onion seeds have been allocated for sowing, which will be transplanted after 40 days onto raised beds using proper spacing to give room for plant growth, and will benefit from the application of starter solution to young plants' roots systems for strong development. The farmers' three acre onion farm is expected **to produce a 30 ton harvest**, which can be sold in local markets for **a profit of 25.8-32 million Tanzanian Shillings** (roughly US \$18,000-\$22,500) after accounting for the costs of production.

The farmers have also been trained to plant hybrid maize using good agricultural practices such as raised beds, and proper spacing (17 centimeters between plants, and 1.5 meters between rows). The cooperative **expects to harvest 1,000 kg of maize** on their half-acre plot, **resulting in a net profit of 400,000-600,000 Tanzanian Shillings** (US \$250-\$443). The profits from these farms will be divided among the members of the Oitera Pre-Rural Cooperative Society, which is comprised of 24 smallholder farmers (7 women and 17 men).



*Photo by Fintrac Inc.*

Seedling trays of the Oitera Pre-Rural Cooperative Society that were sowed with sweet pepper seeds.

### USAID-TAPP TRAININGS INSPIRE SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

USAID-TAPP's training sessions in good agricultural practices (GAPs) and the establishment of demonstration plots near smallholder farmer groups in the Arusha region have inspired individual members of two different groups to volunteer their homes as sites for the establishment of similar plots. Members of Mbughuni Farmers Group and Mwanzo Mwema Vegetables Growers were trained on live barrier planting, the installation and maintenance of drip irrigation systems, and the advantages of fertigation: a method of applying soluble fertilizers through drip system to save labor and time.

Members of Mbughuni Farmers Group are in final preparations of transplanting hybrid tomato and hybrid sweet pepper seedlings, each onto one half-acre plot. Meanwhile, Mwanzo Mwema Vegetables Growers will grow hybrid carrots and sweet peppers on half an acre each. With good agricultural practices and proper record keeping, these farmers expect to be growing 6,675 sweet pepper plants (on double line) **on their half-acre field, harvesting a total of 5,000 kilograms** within six to seven months. When sold in local markets, the farmers expect to earn a prime for their produce, since they will be selling in the off-season. They **expect to earn a profit of at least 6.6 million Tanzanian Shillings** (roughly US \$4,100).



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Members of Mbughuni Farmers Group participating in a training session on how to plant and maintain live barriers.

Mr. Erick is a member of Mwanzo Mwema Vegetables Growers who praised how the drip system has liberated smallholder farmers of Tanzania. "The drip system is so accurate that it irrigates all the plants on time to give the plants proper growth and good yields," said Mr. Erick. Inspired by the success of the group, he has vowed to prepare several rows and install the drip system by himself at his own plot.

### MEET OUR NEW PARTNER: NSOMBO ADG

USAID-TAPP collaborates with local agribusinesses to increase the scope and sustainability of its impact. A new partnership with Nsombo Agro Development Group aims to strengthen the supply chain of fresh fruit to the Dar es Salaam markets from the Rufigi and Mkuranga Districts in the Coastal Region. Currently, Nsombo is purchasing pineapple, passion fruit, watermelon, cucumber and mangoes from farmers in these districts to sell to wholesale markets and hotels.

With assistance from USAID-TAPP, Nsombo will expand its operation to develop an out grower program including providing direct agricultural extension support to the farmers from whom they are buying. In addition, USAID-TAPP and Nsombo ADG will emphasize the growing of good varieties pineapples in Coastal Region. USAID-TAPP and Nsombo will also work with participating farmers to introduce improved seed varieties, better agricultural practices and improved post-harvest handling to increase yields and incomes for both the farmers and the buyer. More consistent and more reliable supplies will strengthen Nsombo's business model as they seek to consolidate existing markets and explore new ones.

In total, with USAID-TAPP assistance, **1,500 smallholder farmers will be integrated into this commercial supply chain**, applying good agricultural practices to increase yields by 75-100% on more than 500 hectares of land. These improvements will result in **\$800,000 in new sales by smallholder farmers** in Tanzania's Coastal Region.

### Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

**"Increased food security through enhanced productivity"**

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. in conjunction with TAHA, the Tanzania Horticultural Association. It is designed to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification and improved market access.

Visit [www.Tanzania-Agric.org](http://www.Tanzania-Agric.org) for more information on upcoming activities and to read more monthly bulletins and success stories.

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